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ABSTRACT

This report presents an overview of the nature and uses of bibliotherapy. The concept is defined in complex as well as simplistic terminology within its historical context; and its dynamics, principles and objectives, and particular applications are discussed. The requisite qualities and skills of the bibliotherapist are analyzed and bibliotherapy is presented as an opportunity for the librarian to influence social change. The concept is addressed both as an art form and as a scientific process, and evidence of its effectiveness is offered. A bibliography of 26 references is included. (Author/RAA)

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BIBLIOTHERAPY: Good Book or Media Selection plus Individual Guidance plus a Definite Goal

Mary Ellen Cardenas

April 1980

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ABSTRACT

This report concerns the nature and the uses of bibliotherapy. The word is defined in complex as well as simplistic terminology and its meaning is traced historically. The objectives of bibliotherapy and its practical use in a classroom, hospital or prison ward are discussed. The career of a bibliotherapist is analyzed and bibliotherapy is presented as a librarian's responsibility toward influencing social change. The concept is discussed as an art form and as a scientific process and therefore the process, principles and rationales of bibliotherapy are enumerated and summarized.

WHAT IS BIBLIOTHERAPY?

Definitions of bibliotherapy range from the most simple to the more complex. Many different, enlightening and helpful definitions can be found in the dictionaries of such fields as medicine, nursing, and psychiatry and in periodical literature of the last half century as well. Most of the definitions posited, however, seem to be in agreement as to the basic construct. Perhaps the one definition which best combines the essential elements found in most scientific statements is the following:

> "Bibliotherapy is a program of selected activity involving reading materials, planned, conducted and controlled as treatment under the guidance of the physician for emotional and other problems. It must be administered by a skilled, professionally-trained librarian within the prescribed purpose and goals. The important and dynamic factors are the relationships which are established, the patient's reactions and responses, and the reporting back to the physicians, for interpretations, evaluations, and directions in follow-up."[1]

Caroline Shrodes, a noted author in the field, called it "a process of interaction between the personality of the reader and imaginative literature which may engage his emotions and free them for conscious and productive use."[2] In the Third New International Dictionary (unabridged), Webster offered the general definition of bibliotherapy as being "the use of selected reading materials as therapeutic adjuncts in medicine and psychiatry; guidance in the solution of personal problems through directed reading."[3] The important variables then are the reader and his/her characteristics, the story and its involvement properties, and the various individual reactions to the story.[4]

These definitions seem consistent enough to give one solid guideline as to what bibliotherapy is. However, conceptualizing theoretical rationales to follow the definition is somewhat more complex. Anyone who has ever practiced bibliotherapy doesn't seem to need to prove its worth beyond the fact that they have

seen it work. And if those who read look back into their experiences, surely they will conclude that the printed word has affected them, changed them, mellowed them. They will indeed testify to the understanding and value of bibliotherapy. It has been said that reading for enjoyment and relaxation is so frequently taken for granted, that its power to foster wholesome attitudes is often overlooked.[5] It is, then, for this reason that it must be made clear that to speak in terms of "therapy" does not imply that a serious maladjustment need be present in order to employ this technique. It merely suggests one way of treating a problem, for even a well-adjusted person encounters obstacles that can be conquered through external forces.[6] One of these forces is, has been, and always will be, bibliotherapy.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BIBLIOTHERAPY

The concept of a person reading to satisfy his/her needs is not a new one. It appears over and over again throughout history, from the inscription on the library at Alexandria found sometime around 300 B.C. - "The nourishment of the soul" - to present-day mention of the word in classrooms, hospitals, prison wards and libraries throughout the whole world.[7]

The Greeks had no word for it, but they were well aware of it. Aristotle recorded the therapeutic value of reading because it aroused emotions within the person which did, in effect, heal. The library at Thebes bears the inscription, "The healing place of the soul." A similar concept was captured and registered in the inscription found in a medieval abbey in Switzerland. Abbey St. Gall bears the inscription, "The medicine chest of the soul."[8] The power of reading has been ever present.

Over sixteen hundred years ago, a distraught and widowed mother approached her local bishop. She was overwhelmed with worry and apprehension because of the waywardness of her son. The bishop's reply was, "Leave him alone. He is not yet teachable. He is puffed up with pride at the novelty of his heresy and the conceit of his captious questions. Only pray for him and he will

find out for himself by reading, what his mistakes are and the depths of his depravity."[9] Reading was the key suggested by the wise bishop. The transformation which these words brought about are recorded in his autobiography: "I had no wish to read further; there was no need to. For immediately, I reached the end of this sentence and it was as though my heart was filled with a light of confidence and all the shadow of my doubt was swept away."[10] The rest of the story is history: the history of triumph over truth, of virtue over vice, a complete cure through a wise choice of reading. A victory for bibliotherapy. St. Augustine's books in fact have in themselves influenced and enriched cultures and nations and have brought solace and wisdom to people repeatedly.

Bibliotherapy can then be traced as evident and forceful in Christian antiquity. Even Shakespeare attests to the curative effects of books, with these words:

> "Come, and take choice of all my library,
> And so beguile thy sorrow."[11]

The first printed treatise on the subject of therapeutic library service was published by an American physician, John M. Galt of Williamsburg, Virginia. He surveyed insane asylums as early as 1840 to decide what could or should be given to the mentally deranged to read.[12]

Bibliotherapy became accepted as part of librarianship in 1904 when qualified, trained librarians took a forceful role in the administration of libraries at McClean Hospital in Waverly, Massachusetts.[13]

Although the concept has been known and practiced since ancient times, the term itself was coined in 1916 by S.M. Crothers in an article which appeared in the Atlantic Monthly. He referred to the technique as a new science in analyzing a friend's bibliopathic institute.[14]

The 1930's saw a growth of interest in the field. The tone was set for the decade at a 1930 library conference when a presenter said, "The books in a well-chosen hospital library stand row upon row like phials in a pharmacy."[15]

An important advancement was made when Pomeroy (1937) attempted to put the field on an empirical basis with a study entitled "Bibliotherapy - A Study in Results of Hospital Library Service," which discussed 1,538 case studies. The 1940's witnessed the advent of articles investigating the philosophical and psychological bases of the field. It was in the 1950's that important development in the field was reached as graduate students completed dissertations on the topic. Dissertations devoted to the subject oftentimes announce the relevancy and future importance of a topic, as well as the emergence of enough information about the topic to provide ideas for a dissertation. Case studies on the effects of bibliotherapy have been the contributions of the sixties and seventies. Dictionaries have included the term since 1941 when it first appeared in Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary as "employment of books and the reading of them in the treatment of nervous disease."

As news and reports reach people, so do readers make a conscious effort to enforce bibliotherapy. The word is not common household or even common library knowledge, but awareness is growing. Studies are underway to prove it a science rather than an art as it is considered today.

It is interesting to note the interest in bibliotherapy outside of the United States. The International Federations of Library Associations have presented various papers on the subject recently. The main interest seems to stem from Hungary, The German Democratic Republic, and the U.S.S.R. Here the use of bibliotherapy is considered as a state of fact. The use of books in the treatment of patients is as indispensible as the use of drugs.[17]

BASIC OBJECTIVES

The objectives of bibliotherapy are wide-ranging indeed, especially since the therapy is meant for children as well as adults, the physically ailing as well as the mentally deranged;

those who are free and those who are not. As a basic objective, bibliotherapy holds as its goal the transformation and renewal of man.[18] More specifically, the objectives are:

1. "to teach a person to think constructively and positively
2. to encourage people to talk freely about their problems
3. to help people analyze their attitudes and modes of behavior
4. to point out that there is more than one solution to a problem
5. to stimulate an eagerness to find an adjustment to problems that will lessen conflict with society
6. to assist people in comparing their problems with those of others."[19]
7. "to identify, extend, and intensify personal interests
8. to give young people an awareness of themselves and others
9. to furnish emotional release or satisfaction
10. to induce intellectual curiosity and reflective thinking
11. to develop social insight through the reinforcement of challenging attitudes
12. to give the opportunity to re-examination of a sense of values
13. to provide aesthetic experience
14. to develop critical appreciation of books, magazines and newspapers
15. to give a sense of belonging to the culture
16. to furnish recreation through pure enjoyment and entertainment."[20]
17. to actually solve an individual's existing emotional problems and pressures by affording the individual a similar experience vicariously through books
18. to "prevent" a particular problem from becoming a "hard case" (The theory here is that the patient will satisfactorily be able to make an adjustment to crisis when it does arise in life.)[21]
19. to reinforce an attitude of conversion to another attitude on controversial issues
20. to gain fuller knowledge of a practical problem and, thus, the greater understanding to deal with it.

DYNAMICS OF BIBLIOTHERAPY

Bibliotherapy, like psychotherapy, involves three mechanisms. They are identification, catharsis and insight.[22]

Identification: Of the three, identification is by far the most important. Readers must identify with one of the characters in the book. Assuming that affiliation with the character does take place, readers begin to feel a diminished sense of isolation and of difference from others. Such identification also fosters a rise in self-esteem if the character is admired and, in any case, it adds to the general recognition of human strengths and weaknesses.[23]

Catharsis: By becoming further involved in the story, experiencing vicariously the motivations, conflicts, and emotions of the character, readers thus undergo catharsis, which is essentially the release of emotion or psychological tension.[24]

Insight: Because of the release of tension, individuals can then achieve new or additional insights into their problems via the process of "working through." This phase usually necessitates a counselor's help.[25]

For example, a child who identifies with a frustrated boy who comes from a broken home of divorced parents would hopefully experience a relase from emotion or psychological tension (catharsis) when he reads of how the story's character feels. In reading how the imaginary character solves his problem, the real child might be more able to achieve additional insight into his own problem.

The underlying assumption of bibliotherapy in its dynamic process is that when people read, they bring their own needs and problems to the reading experience. They interpret the author's words in light of their own experiences. Through identification with characters in literature, readers can attain a better understanding of themselves. Social, emotional and psychological problems can be checked, solved or prevented.[26]

The point must be made that the likelihood of encountering a character in a story or book with whom readers can identify is dependent on the readers' experiences, attitudes, values, desires and needs. But when readers recognize these difficulties as similar to their own, the mechanisms of catharsis and insight are likely to become operative. But again, depending on their own experiences and emotional depth, readers can relive the conflict and emotion of their alter egos. The depth to which catharsis can take place and transcend intellectual identification will depend on the realm of experiences of individuals in empathetic emotional reactions.

PRINCIPLES OF BIBLIOTHERAPY

Complementing the process of bibliotherapy are several basic principles that are of special note.

Principle 1: Understand the nature and dynamics of bibliotherapy, incorporating the theoretical aspects of bibliotherapy into a functional theory.

As professionals, librarians must realize that a growing body of theory and empirical research is providing the practitioners or bibliotherapists with an increasingly more adequate basis for their work. These findings or results can be incorporated into a well-articulated and operational framework.[27]

Principle 2: Possess at least a general familiarity with the literature which students will use, its length, level of difficulty, characters and readability.

The inherent dangers in not being familiar with the literature read by students or patients are pointedly obvious.[28]

Principle 3: Bibliotherapeutic reading can be encouraged through the use of prompting techniques.

It is usual that patients or students will not think of reading as a means for solving personal dilemmas or conflicts. Whenever possible, the therapist should even suggest alternative selections from which students choose a piece of literature to read.

Principle 4: Readiness is an important factor to bear in mind when considering the utilization of the techniques of bibliotherapy.

The most favorable time for introducing bibliotheraphy is when a working relationship involving mutual trust has been developed, the patient's or student's problem has been described, and somewhat explored, and the student or patient is exhibiting personal involvement in solving the problem. In essence then, bibliotherapy is both a therapy and a process of learning new attitudes and values, and of gathering more mature self-insight.[29]

Principle 5: Books should be suggested rather than prescribed. Some bibliotherapists report that patients choose in their own area of need without any prompting. Often just a bulletin board with book jackets depicting success stories of people with physical handicaps is enough to spark the courage or desire of students to choose an example of this literature to assimilate as their own problem-solving technique.[30] Many will need prompting however. The way a word is spoken may decide the way it is heeded. And the way in which a book is introduced may make or break its influence on a child. This is particularly true of a book with a special meaning. Certainly it will not help to say to a little girl: "Here, Sarah, read this. It is about a fat girl just like you." This simply hits where it hurts and wounds are not healed in this way.

Principle 6: Practitioners should be sensitive to physical handicaps of individuals which may dictate the necessity of using special kinds of reading materials.

If patients are visually handicapped, for example, the bibliotherapist should be aware of the size of type, space between the lines, and design of the type. If "talking books" are available, they should be used with visually handicapped learners, or even with below-average readers.

Principle 7: Bibliotherapy seems to be most effective with people of average or above-average reading ability.[31]

While bibliotherapy claims success with individuals of varying

levels of intelligence, reading ability, and personality characteristics, it is only logical that it would be most successful with people who are at ease and comfortable at the task.

Principle 8: Reading of the literature by patients or students should be accompanied by discussion or counseling.[30]

In delving into individuals' reactions to literature, agreement or disagreement with the actions, decisions, behavior of the characters in the book can be discussed as through they were real people. Hopefully, insights will be gained as much from the reading as from the counseling.

Principle 9: Caution regarding the use of bibliotherapy is is advocated.

Undoubtedly, bibliotherapy cannot be used with all persons, in all settings and for all purposes. Practitioners are urged to use good judgment in the application of the process if they decide to add it to their arsenal of helpful techniques.

PARTICULAR APPLICATIONS OF BIBLIOTHERAPY

The applications of bibliotherapy are almost limitless. The prime areas of critical need for such a process, however, are outlined below.

1. Physical
   a) blindness
   b) deformity
   c) deafness
   d) homeliness
   e) obesity
   f) speech defects
2. Chronic Illness
   a) invalidism
   b) rheumatic fever
   c) cancer
3. Mental and Emotional Problems
   a) low vocabulary
   b) mental disturbance
   c) mental deficiency
   d) reading difficulty

4. Poor Personality or Character Traits

   a) conceit
   b) intolerance
   c) irresponsibility
   d) loneliness
   e) selfishness
   f) timidity

5. Socio-Economic Problems

   a) alcoholism
   b) boy-girl, man-woman relationships
   c) drug addiction
   d) family relationships
   e) generation gap
   f) law and order versus freedom
   g) poverty
   h) racial and ethnic relationships
   i) violence
   j) war and peace

AN INTERESTING AND CHALLENGING CAREER

Bibliotherapy is not only interesting, but challenging, as an activity for librarians. The very fact that its effectiveness has not been determined scientifically and the fact that there is still much debate as to whether it is a science or an art has precluded its becoming a career as such. There have been suggested requirements for professional bibliotherapists which would certainly almost preclude or prohibit the practice of the process in schools at this time. Among various suggested requirements are: a thorough knowledge of children's literature, psychology, psychiatry, biological sciences, speech and sociology. Will this mean that since few or no teachers will meet these requirements that no teacher or librarian will be able to practice bibliotherapy at all?

Perhaps the answer lies in a combination of teacher - librarian, or that of guidance counselor - librarian. Certainly, a teacher or counselor is in an ideal situation to see what a particular child's problem might be. In daily contact with the child, they can observe the child's interactions with others and

note his or her self-image, and then can interpret these actions or behavior. A librarian with wide access to books and the knowledge contained within can then suggest specific readings.[34] If these teams of professionals abide by the principles, and take caution in the areas of serious maladies, relying on the professional knowledge of a psychiatrist or psychologist, there is much to be achieved. To be effective, they must cultivate the proper personal qualities and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. They must realize the need for an interdisciplinary approach and be faithful to the ethical standards of bibliotherapy.[35]

Personal Qualities of the Bibliotherapist

Among the personal qualities which a bibliotherapist or a team of bibliotherapists must cultivate are:

1. "a balanced personality which implies emotional stability, psychical well-being, mature judgment, and the ability to channel personal feelings and to direct them into the best interest of those whom one desires to help
2. the ability to work with people, including the competence to instruct and the skill to supervise other personnel and associates
3. the willingness to familiarize oneself with the community as well as the individual and to emphathize with the misfortunes and shortcomings of others and to react with sufficient facility to be of help
4. an understanding of the goal desired in each instance, together with a willingness to accept responsibility for the action taken, and the ability to assume, without reluctance and without arrogance, the authority necessary to meet each situation."[36]

Knowledge of the Bibliotherapist or Team of Bibliotherapists

No one person could know all that would be needed in order

to assure total competence in medical as well as personal fields. Again, for this reason, perhaps the ideal bibliotherapist would be a counselor/librarian combination or at least the possibility must be established that interdisciplinary communication would be possible. In any case, knowledge of the following would be demanded:

1. "literature for children, young adults and adults
2. the biological sciences of anatomy and physiology
3. elementary psychiatry
4. psychology insofar as it pertains to:
   a) techniques of diagnosis, guidance, and counseling
   b) the physically handicapped and emotionally disturbed
   c) different kinds of ethnic groups
   d) principles of motivation and remotivation
   e) techniques of testing along with training in the interpretation of test results
5. sociology as it relates to:
   a) medical and social problems of illness
   b) techniques of rehabilitation of the aging
   c) training in statistics and report writing."[37]

Skills of the Bibliotherapist

Among required skills of a bibliotherapist or a team of bibliotherapists can be cited the following:

1. "the ability to discover a person's emotional, mental and spiritual needs
2. the aptitude to make valid interpretations of a person's reactions to readings
3. the facility to understand the use the terminology of medicine, psychiatry, and psychology so that one can communicate effectively with the practitioners of those professions
4. the competency to evaluate capacities, to assign specific books, to administer a suitable reading program, to review

and evaluate the program constantly, and to make progress reports

5. the discernment to discard the erroneous and irrelevant and to draw only warranted and valid conclusions."[38]

Code of Conduct for a Bibliotherapist

Certain ethical considerations would certainly bind the bibliotherapist to a rigid code. Such a code would naturally include the following three items:

1. "a willing assumption of the limitations of both the librarian and of bibliotherapy
2. an acknowledgement of the potential contributions which the other professions can bring to bibliotherapy
3. a strict observance of professional secrecy commensurate with the confidential nature of the responsibilities assumed."[39]

At this point, it would certainly seem that no one librarian or even team of two people could possess all the required qualities and skills in order to produce effective bibliotherapy. True it is. But certainly this interdisciplinary communication is the ideal of society. Surely a physician must often coordinate activities with a spiritual advisor of a given patient, the private nurse, or a sociologist. When the task of involvement with other human beings for the good of civilization becomes a combined community effort, perhaps the very civilization itself will be on the path of an ideal situation.

It must be stressed at this time that counseling is not advising! Counseling is characterized by a permissive atmosphere in which the client is helped to interpret circumstances surrounding a problem or a need. On the other hand, advising carries the connotation of offering ready-made solutions. Bibliotherapy is the former, not the latter.

AUDIOVISIOTHERAPY: A POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE

The extension of the term bibliotherapy into the realm of visual and audio-visual media has not yet taken place. Educators and counselors often use motion pictures for similar purposes but the term in itself has not yet emerged and - in fact - little communication between the two branches has even transpired.[40]

In the field of education there is a special need for audio-visiotherapy because despite the recognition of certain children whose problems seem emotional in nature and who could obviously benefit from bibliotherapy, these same children often cannot read! Thus, a paradox occurs. Some of the reasons may be boredom, frustrations involving reading, or failure to perceive the relevance in the printed word. What happens to this significant portion of children with this myriad of difficulties? It would seem almost that a most important avenue of learning is precluded from their experience.[41]

Perhaps bibliotherapy as it has been discussed should be discarded then, but the concept should not be overlooked! The avenue of media must be explored.

There certainly are certain advantages to the use of films: quicker, immediate stimulation through visual recognition, and facility for programmed monitoring. This is the age of television and mass communication. These are the eighties. Film today caters to a child's conditioned mode of perceptual reception.[42]

Although books leave more to the imagination, are more calm and pastoral and allow for more retrospective analysis, film is generally more intense and vivid. For this reason, it is also more potentially dangerous. It can cause negative behavior if the wrong child sees a certain film at the wrong time in life, and without any supervision or follow-up.

In any case, educators and librarians alike must open their eyes to the most powerful influence affecting children in this, the twentieth century, if we are to abort the onset of problem behaviors and work out existing problems for all children,

everywhere, despite a possibility of not being able to read.*

Outside of the educational context, there is also a need for media therapy. Lately, there has been a strong urge for media therapy for the exadvantaged. It has been suggested that the library deal with the arts from a creative perspective in informal classes and clubs for poetry, drama, art, photography, music and dance. These would bring financial as well as aesthetic rewards to inmates. If dealt with interpretively, the prisoners could perhaps gain self-understanding, which is the underlying purpose of all therapy. Rubin, an authority in the field, has posited that such use of the arts through the library could change a person's attitude or behavior. He states that it works because "it is psychology through art."[43]

In existence today are three programs in correctional institutions in the U.S.A. Each is exemplary. In order to make media therapy in prisons a nationwide effort, however, the same interdisciplinary communication between librarians and other professionals would be mandatory.

ART OR SCIENCE?

Bibliotherapy is a potentially powerful change device. There are many who think that as a result of the basic process involved, and the complex methodology for its enactment, bibliotherapy is a science. It does seem that the definitions and descriptions of bibliotherapy are searching for the development of an exacting procedure. Unfortunately, however, most of the literature in the field is still theoretical and antidotal. Each year more and more doctoral and masters thesis are written on the subject or some aspect of it. In a real sense, then, dissertations

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* A survey conducted by the National Reading Council in September 1970 indicates that more than 18,500,000 Americans over the age of sixteen are "practically illiterate."[44]

serve as a bellweather as they serve to announce the advance of a particular field of investigation.[45] Yet very little testing of the effectiveness of bibliotherapy has been conducted. Even the Veterans Administration Hospitals, where bibliotherapy programs have been in operation for more than fifty years, have done little or no surveys of specific reliance.[46] While progress seems slow at this point because of methodological research problems, research is going on and the hope is that one day bibliotherapy will be considered a science.[47]

If not a science, then bibliotherapy must certainly be an art. No one could ever deny that the intuition which a therapist uses to approach is patient, and the creativity released in order to achieve a goal much resembles the approach a painter would use in approaching a subject for portrayal. So much of what the bibliotherapist who is successful possesses is talent and feeling, in the true sense of the words.

BIBLIOTHERAPY AS A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In this day and age of social change and upheaval, the basic purpose of the library remains unchanged and intact. It is still that of service. What is necessary perhaps is a change in our thinking, and a reevaluation of our activities and how they meet and fulfill that goal.[48]

Bibliotherapy is a service of a very special nature, regarding social responsibility. It is perhaps one of the greatest opportunities as well as one of the biggest responsibilities to take an integral and valuable part in the programming of the health of the community, meaning a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity.[49]

Many famous librarians would agree to this and the fact that perhaps the greatest charge of a librarian is to "get books and people together." Bibliotherapy is just such a practice and in this sense it helps people to develop living skills, rebuild lives, and invest man with dignity.[50]

Alvin Toffler in Future Shock points out that the accelerated flow-through we are experiencing cannot but contribute to the instability of personality patterns among many people who have difficulty finding a life style. Toffler goes on to say that the person who lacks a clear grasp of his or her own values (whatever these may be) is progressively crippled.[51]

A recently published report done by a task force of eminent educators and funded by the Ford Foundation concluded that education does not meet the demand for relevance called for by Toffler and others.[52] Only through an intensive national effort can sufficient change be brought about to make education relevant. Bibliotherapy is just such an opportunity to achieve just such a task. Bibliotherapy can and will make pelple's lives, education and whole being relevant.

More specifically, the ACONDA report makes social responsibility a high priority for American Library Association members. It stresses the contributions which libraries can make in alleviating and even solving some critical problems of society. It calls for the support of efforts to help inform and educate individuals on these problems and to encourage people everywhere to read the views and facts which are self-concerning.[53]

HOW EFFECTIVE IS BIBLIOTHERAPY?

Only a very few would contest the fact that books are dynamic and vital and that they are capable of changing the direction of events in some cases, sometimes for good and sometimes for evil. "Throughout history, there is ample evidence that books are not inanimate, peaceful articles belonging to the cloistered shades and academic quiet of monasteries, universities and other retreats from an evil, materialistic world."[54]

Book burnings, murder or banishment of writers and the supression of ideas and opposition by dictators bear mute testimony to the explosive forces which are concealed in books. One need only reflect on the publications which down through the

ages have effected change. Four hundred years ago Machiavelli wrote The Prince for the sole purpose of freeing his beloved Italy from foreign aggression. England responded with a tremendous expansion of her commercial and industrial economy when Adam Smith wrote The Wealth of Nations. Thomas Paine's Common Sense triggered the American revolution. Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe has been indirectly accused of starting the Civil War. Karl Marx intended in writing Das Kapital to describe a capitalistic system as he found it in the nineteenth century. His doctrines have long since had the official force of a religion in the communist world. Henry David Thoreau wrote an essay, On the Duty of Civil Disobedience, which in essence was to provide the inspiration and impetus for the non-violent resistance movements of Ghandi in India and Martin Luther King in the United States. And finally, Mein Kampf by Adolph Hitler sold five million copies in Germany alone in 1939 and became an all absorbing philosophy to the same millions during that decade.[55] Thus is history's testament to the effectiveness of books. In each of the cases cited, the printed word did change attitudes and behavior.

On an individual basis, the effectiveness of bibliotherapy is somewhat more difficult to measure. Obviously, people are a product of their experiences. Reading is usually one of these experiences. But the extent to which reading actually does influence a particular person in a particular way is a much debated issue. Russell and Shrodes reviewed seventy-three scientific studies and professional articles concerning the value of bibliotherapy. "The resultsof a number of these studies reviewed concluded that both research evidence and opinion should act as a stopping point for the undue claims of the bibliotherapeutic process. There is no guarantee that a particular piece of literature will indluence a certain child or adolescent, or if an influence exists, that it will operate in the direction desired."[56]

Still another survey revealed that "a child can experience a feeling of self-acceptance from the teacher when the reading materials presented reflect his or her life and language.[57] This is almost always true. But, though books aid in adjustment or identification, the results tend to be less observable or conducive to measurement at this stage in the development of bibliotherapy as a science. Perhaps at a time not far in the future, reports will be written regarding the actual results of counseling with books, and the achievements will be tabulated. Presently, for the most part, it is mere speculation.

The Heitzman team gathered survey data until 1974 and recorded the effectiveness of bibliotherapy in the following manner. "Weiss (1961) found that attitudes changed as a result of readings about capital punishment. Annin and Meier (1934) discovered students reading information on the Australian Prime Minister formed opinions biased in the direction of their readings. Fisher (1968) found he was able to affect student attitudes toward American Indians with readings. The above three studies all share a serious deficiency in failing to provide information (validity, reliability) on the dependent measure used to assess attitude. In addition, the Annis-Meier and the Weiss studies used questionably smaller samples."[58]

One interesting study revealed change in terms of percentages. Smith (1948) asked students "if they remembered any book, story, poem, or article which changed their thinking or attitudes." Of the 502 responses, 60% indicated change in attitude. Another 30% registered a change in ideas, concepts, and understandings. Believe it or not, 90% remembered a change in behavior.[59]

Impressive though these results may seem one would logically question if the wording of the question did not elicit a "right" answer. And one would have to ask: Was the registered change of a permanent nature?

All of these and other questions regarding bibliotherapy are still unanswered. But research is broadening in the field. The hope is that one day results will be tabulated in such a way as to impress people as to the value and benefits of bibliotherapy

as a science.

THERE IS A NEED

Stories about realistic people in a true-to-life situation are vital. At present there are a good many books dealing with "self-help" for adults. The same need must be recognized for children in order that they too may learn to cope via literature. It would be altogether helpful if family members in plots were presented as angry, hostile and jealous instead of as ideal and perfect. Still a better approach would be to have the main character handle the people and/or problem situations in more mature ways and not necessarily always triumph in the end. All too frequently in a real life situation it seems that "the good guy finishes last." Stories should portray their characters as trying to solve their dilemmas in a variety of ways. The process of problem-solving should be emphasized.[61]

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The value of the use of the printed word in the solution of personal problems and the promotion of mental health has long been recognized but little has been written on the subject and certainly its major strengths remain untapped. Although bibliotherapy does have its limitations and is even dangerous if it is improperly administered, it also has great potential which should be exploited.

Indeed it could be stated that one of civilization's most baffling concerns is better understanding of society's greatest resource: humankind itself. Humans are unique because they love, hate, reason and create their own values. Bibliotherapy is a wide avenue which leads to that understanding.

The importance and future significance of bibliotherapy must not be underestimated. Even in this decade of mass media, materials for reading stand as the most common way of acquiring

and transmitting knowledge. In addition and in accordance with Alvin Toffler's predictions, classroom instruction is emphasizing values clarification and analysis. These two factors together with the fact that bibliotherapy is a systematic, if not yet a scientific, method for problem-solving and attitudinal change, promise that the potential of bibliotherapy will not be ignored.[62]

Surely additional research will point to the fact that the strategy of bibliotherapy "should form part of the repertoire of every librarian."[63]

The following are some safe and valid conclusions according to Rongione:

1. "Despite some confusion and limitations, there is sufficient evidence to support the claim in favor of the therapeutic value of carefully selected reading.
2. Individual librarians ought to acquaint themselves with some of the superabundant literature in the field of bibliotherapy.
3. Schools of library service must take a more active interest, and institute courses, workshops, seminars and clinical experiences in bibliotherapy.
4. Hospitals, mental and correctional institutions, as well as schools, should investigate the possible benefits of making use of people trained in bibliotherapy and bibliocounseling.
5. In addition to the therapeutic value, other benefits to patients and students can be reasonably expected from a wise choice of reading."[64]

The poem entitled "The Library" by George Crabbe gives an artistic and apt summary to many of the concepts and ideas fostered in this study:

> But what strange art, what magic
> can dispose
> The troubled mind to change its
> native woes?
> This books can do; nor this alone,
> they give.

New views to life, and teach us
how to live.
They soothe the griev'd, the stubborn
they chastise.
Fools they admonish, and
confirm the wise.[65]

FOOTNOTES

[1]Ruth M. Tews, "Introduction." Library Trends XI (October 1962):99 and
Armando R. Favassa, "Bibliotherapy: A Critique of the Literature." Bulletin of the Medical Library Association LIV (April 1966):139.

[2]David H. Russell and Caroline Shrodes, "Contributions of Research in Bibliotherapy to the Language Arts Program." The School Review 58 (September 1950):335.

[3]Daniel Webster, Webster's Third New International Dictionary, (Springfield: G.C. Merriam, 1967).

[4]Fred McKinney, "Exploration in Bibliotherapy." Personnel and Guidance Journal 55 (May 1977):551.

[5]Quoted in Herman Axelrod and Thomas R. Teti, "An Alternative to Bibliotherapy: Audiovisiotherapy." Educational Technology 16 (December 1976):37.

[6]Joan Hoagland, "Bibliotherapy: Aiding Children in Personality Development." Elementary English 49 (March 1972):390.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Axelrod, p. 36.

[9]St. Augustine, Confessions, 3:12:21.

[10]Ibid, 8:12:29.

[11]William Shakespeare, Titus Adronicus, Act IV, Sc. 1, l. 34.

[12]Axelrod, p. 36.

[13]Ruth M. Tews, "Progress in Bibliotherapy." Advances in Librarianship, vol. 1 (New York: Academic Press, 1978).

[14]Henry D. Olsen, "Bibliotherapy to Help Children Solve Problems." Elementary School Journal 75 (April 1975):124.

[15]Kathleen A. Heitzman and William Ray Heitzman, "The Science of Bibliotherapy: A Critical Review of Research Findings." Reading Improvement 12 (Summer 1975):120.

[16]Ibid, p. 121.

[17]Ruth M. Tews, "Bibliotherapy: A Social Responsibility." Library Occurrent 23 (November 1971):395.

[18]Ibid, p. 396.

[19]Terry Shepherd and Lynn B. Iles, "What is Bibliotherapy?" Language Arts 53 (May 1976):570.

[20]A.L. Lejeune, "Bibliocounseling as a Guidance Technique." Catholic Library World 41 (November 1969):160.

[21]Ibid, p. 163.

[22]Delwyn G. Schubert, "The Role of Bibliotherapy in Reading Instruction." Exceptional Children 41 (April 1975):498.

[23]Cheryl Corman, "Bibliotherapy --- Insight for the Learning Handicapped." Language Arts 52 (October 1975):935.

[24]Harold A. Moses and Joseph S. Zaccaria, "Bibliotherapy in an Educational Context: Rationale and Principles." The High School Journal 52 (April 1969): 401.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Leroy G. Barruth, "Bibliotherapy and the School Counselor." The School Counselor (January 1976): 191.

[27]Moses, p. 404.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Louis A. Rongione, "Bibliotherapy: Its Nature and Uses." Catholic Library World 43 (May 1972):497.

[34]Shepherd, p. 570.

[35]Rongione, p. 497.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid, p. 498.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Margaret E. Monroe and Rhea J. Rubin, "Bibliotherapy: Trends in the United States." Libri 25 (July 1975):156.

[41]Axelrod, p. 37.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Rhea J. Rubin, "Prison Libraries: Focus 2 --- Service to the Ex-advantaged." Catholic Library World 45 (April 1974):439.

[44]D.L. Williams, "Positive Effects of Reading on Mental and Physical Health." Freedomways 16 (No. 3 1976):186.

[45]Heitzman, p. 122.

[46]Karen Tiller, "Bibliotherapy and the Treatment of Emotional Disturbances." Catholic Library World 45 (April 1974): 429.

[47]Heitzman, p. 122.

[48]Tews, p. 396.

[49]Ibid, p. 393.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Quoted in Ibid, p. 397.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Ibid, p. 393.

[54]Lejeune, p. 159.

[55]Ibid, p. 160.

[56]Quoted in Betty Edwards, "The Therapeutic Value of Reading." Elementary English 49 (February 1972):215.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Heitzman, p. 122.

[59]Ibid.

[60]F.B. Cacha, "Book Therapy for Abused Children." Language Arts 55 (February 1978):201.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Heitzman, p. 123.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Rongione, p. 500.

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